

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A retractor system comprising:

a. a retractor body having a closed position and an open position, said closed position presenting a substantially linear form for ease in placement of the closed retractor body in a region to be retracted, and said open position providing a working area that is greater than, but only slightly greater than, the distance between corresponding adjacent pedicles in said area to be retracted, and said retractor body having two elongated channels;

b. a pair of pedicle screws for attachment to each of said correspondingly adjacent pedicles, and a pair of guide members in polyaxial engagement with a respective pedicle screw so that the guide member has a range of movement defining a cone with respect to the longitudinal axis of said screw, each of said guide members having sufficient length to permit it to pass through a corresponding channel in the retractor body, and each guide member having an associated attachment member for use in pulling the retractor body down onto the end of the associated pedicle screw; and

c. said retractor body being formed in a single piece and having a living hinge that allows movement from the closed position to the open position while fully enclosing said working area when in the open position, the circumference of said retractor body being substantially the same in both the closed and the open positions.

2. A retractor system as defined in claim 1, further comprising a web across the bottom of the operating space when the retractor is in an open position, said web being formed of a material that can be removed in areas where desired but which can prevent unwanted tissue from intruding into the operating space in other areas.

3. A retractor system as defined in claim 1, further comprising at least one finger formed of a material that permits it to be used to retract anatomical elements within the operating field.

4. A retractor system comprising:

a. a retractor body having a closed position and an open position, said closed position presenting a substantially linear form for ease in placement of the closed retractor body in a region to be retracted;

b. a pair of pedicle screws for attachment to pedicles; and

c. a pair of guide members in polyaxial engagement with a respective pedicle screw so that the guide member has a range of movement defining a cone with respect to the longitudinal axis of said screw.

5. A retractor system comprising:

a. a retractor body having a closed position and an open position, the circumference of said body being substantially the same in both the closed and open positions, said body including a plurality of hinges to permit it to move between said open and close positions;

b. a pair of pedicle screws for attachment to pedicles; and

c. a pair of guide members in polyaxial engagement with a respective pedicle screw so that the guide member has a range of movement defining a cone with respect to the longitudinal axis of said screw.

6. A retractor system as defined in claim 5, wherein the retractor body is formed from a single piece.